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## EPIDEMIC INFLUENZA.

### PREVALENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Telegraphic reports from State health officers indicate that there has been little change in the prevalence of influenza in the United States since the middle of February. For the week ended March 15, seven States report an increase in the number of cases as compared with the preceding week, viz, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, and Virginia. The following-named States report a decrease: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, and Vermont. (See p. 568.)

Reports from the zones around Army camps show a slight general decline in the number of cases as compared with the week ended March 8. (See p. 572.)

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## VENEREAL DISEASES.

### COURT DECISION RELATIVE TO EXAMINATION OF PERSONS SUSPECTED OF BEING DISEASED.

The following abstract of a decision of the Supreme Court of Iowa shows the necessity for securing positive and definite laws authorizing action by boards of health in cases requiring the examination and detention of persons suspected of having venereal diseases. The abstract is taken from the weekly advance sheets of the Southwestern Reporter for March 5, 1919, issued by the West Publishing Co.

"One Wragg was arrested charged with lewdness. Bail was fixed, subject, however, to the order of the local board of health, which board subsequently issued an order detaining the accused until it could be ascertained whether he was afflicted with a venereal disease. Wragg then sued out a writ of habeas corpus for his release. The stipulated facts showed that petitioner would be compelled to permit an expert to extract approximately 5 cubic centimeters of blood from petitioner's veins to determine whether he was afflicted with syphilis, such test being known as the 'Wassermann reaction,' and that the petitioner would be further restrained if the expert should report a positive reaction.

"The Supreme Court of Iowa, in an opinion by Judge Weaver in *Wragg v. Griffin* (170 Northwestern Reporter, 400), after determining that neither under the statute law nor under the rules of the board of health could a person merely suspected of having a venereal disease be compelled to submit to such an examination, says: 'Even when charged with the gravest of crimes, one can not be compelled to give evidence against himself, nor can the State compel him to submit to

a medical or surgical examination, the result of which may tend to convict him of a public offense; and, if there be any good reason why the same objections are not available in a proceeding which may subject him to ignominious restraint and public ostracism, it is at least a safe and salutary proposition to hold that, before the courts will uphold such an exercise of power, it must be authorized by a clear and definite expression of the legislative will.'

"The writ was therefore sustained."